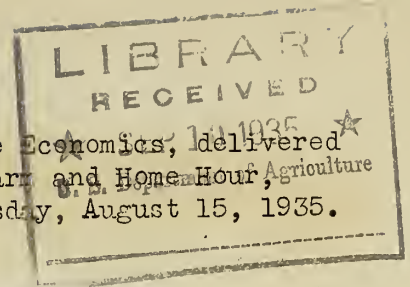


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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR



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A radio talk by Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, Agriculture broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Thursday, August 15, 1935.

MR. GAPEN: Miss Van Deman, if you pardon me for saying so, you have the air of one about to go places and see things.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Maybe that's all because I'm wearing a felt hat today. Now if you were a woman you'd know at a glance that it is a last spring's model.

MR. GAPEN: Well, aren't you about to go places?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, sir. I am, now that you drag it out of me. I'm going on my vacation and I'm going to a cool place, that's why the felt hat.

MR. GAPEN: All right, Miss Van Deman. We won't press you further about your personal plans. We're just envious of that vacation look in your eye. What's on your Household Calendar today?

MISS VAN DEMAN: A miscellany of things. But more canning questions than anything else.

I had a nice long letter the other day from a Farm and Home Hour friend out in Akron, Ohio. She doesn't understand our policy on oven canning. Oven canning's so easy, ~~she~~ says, why isn't it all right to process all your canned foods in the oven. Then she adds, "I've oven canned now for three years, and have had nothing spoil but corn".

Well, we say, why lose your good corn three years running. This corn spoiled because it wasn't properly processed. The bacteria that caused it to spoil weren't killed off in the oven. And this is the reason. I know it sounds like a believe it or not story.

When you put glass jars or tin cans of food in the oven to process, the temperature inside the containers doesn't go much if any above the boiling point. That's around 212 degrees Fahrenheit, except in places with a high altitude. I know that sounds queer, when the temperature of the oven itself may be 250 or 275 degrees F. But it's true. If you ran a thermometer down into the containers of food as they were processing in the oven, you'd find it so. And you'd be surprised also how slowly the heat penetrates to the center of a container filled with a thick starchy mass like corn cut from the cob.

That's why we do not advise the oven method or the water-bath method for corn, and beans, and the other nonacid vegetables. For juicy fruits and tomatoes, the oven and the boiling water bath are O. K. But for the nonacid vegetables and meats, steam pressure is the only safe and sane method.

MR. GAPEN: Safe and sane, Miss Van Deman? Isn't that going a little strong?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Not a bit too strong, Mr. Gapen. Our friend in Ohio did
(over)

say that corn was the only one of her oven-canned foods that went bad for her. But she was just lucky, that was all, if none of her other nonacid vegetables spoiled. In the Bureau of Home Economics we feel that it's better to rely on bacteriology than on luck.

And if you should talk to a commercial canner, he wouldn't be slow to tell you what he thinks. No commercial canner in his right mind would consider for a moment canning corn or any other nonacid vegetable except in a retort, where he can hold steam under 10 or 15 pounds of pressure. He knows that's the only safe and the sure way to get the food in the cans at the high temperature needed to kill the bacteria.

Now to go back to my friend's letter again. She says "If 275 degrees is not hot enough for safe canning in the oven I don't see why a higher temperature could not be used. You know it could be 550 degrees if necessary."

Yes, I agree that you could run the oven heat up to 550 degrees and hold it there. In a good modern oven you can regulate the heat to any point you want it. Don't misunderstand me about regulating the oven heat. That isn't the real point here. But if the oven were 550 degrees, oh the consequences to the glass jars and the tin cans. The glass would crack, and the seams in tin cans would weaken. No, that just doesn't work. If you wish, can your fruit and tomatoes in the oven. And if you don't want to go to the expense of a steam pressure canner for processing your corn and lima beans, then dry them, or do something else with them.

So much for canning - at least today.

Now just a word about bread, home-made bread. In hot weather like this we get a lot of letters from homemakers asking how come their bread is "sticky at the center of the loaf and has a bad smell".

That's the work of mischievous bacteria too. They get into the dough and do things to it that gives it that sticky, ropey texture. The worst of it is, these micro-organisms are hard to get rid of. The heat of baking may not kill them. And you can't see that they are hiding in the ingredients when you mix the dough, or in the seams of your bread pans, or somewhere else around the kitchen. The only way to get rid of these unseen pests, if I may call them such, is to scald and sun all the utensils and cloths that come near your bread before it's baked and after you take it out of the oven. For the scalding, use water with vinegar added to it. And be sure to bake your bread very thoroughly in hot weather, and let it cool thoroughly before you put it away in the box. Sometimes commercial bakers put in a little acid right in their dough to prevent ropey bread. A homemaker might put a little vinegar in the bread dough.

MR. GAPEN: Miss Van Deman, I'm going to have to call time on you. I think that all your Farm and Home Hour friends join me in wishing you a grand vacation. We'll be looking for you back in September.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Gapen, and good-bye everybody until next month.